

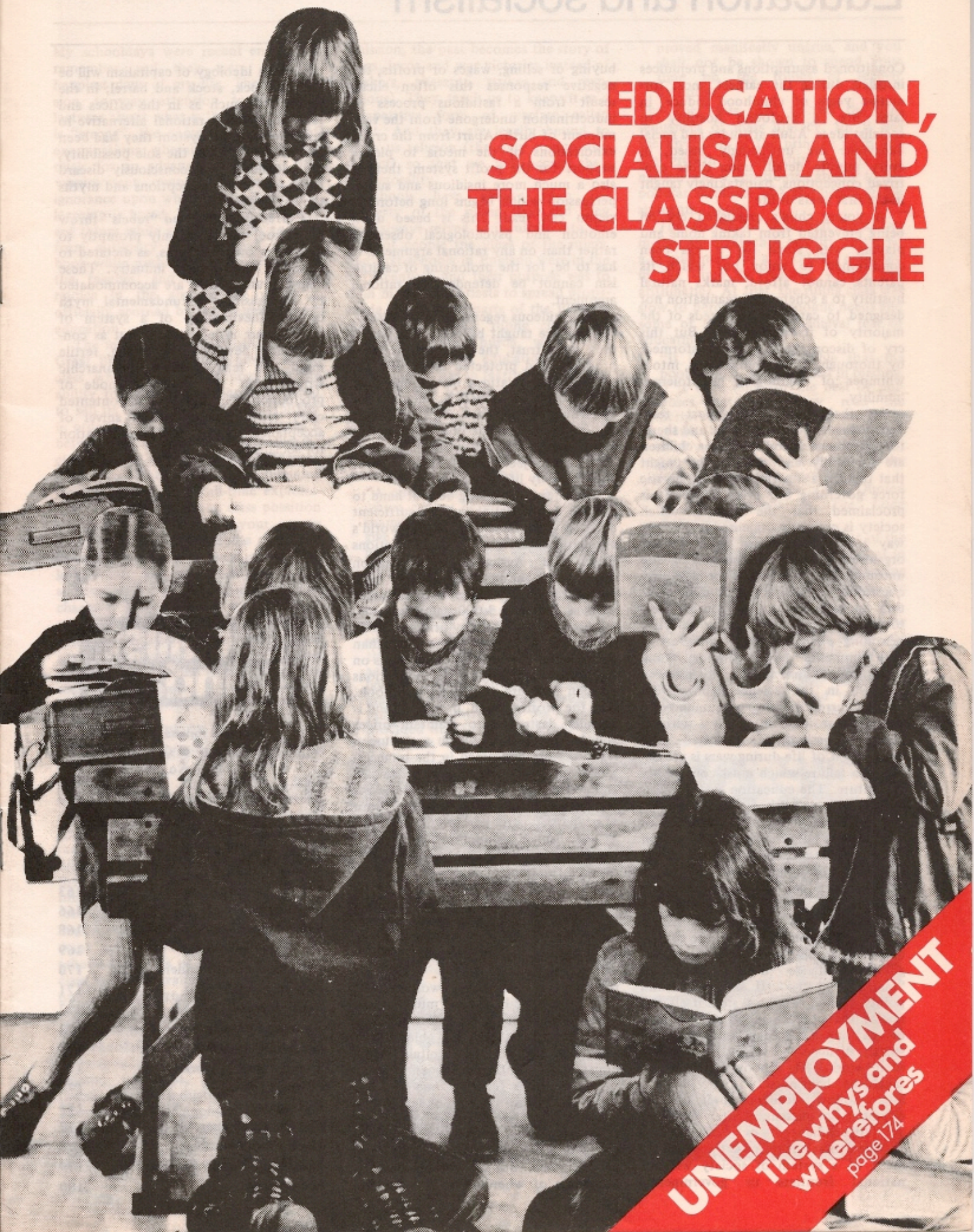
SEPTEMBER 1980

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Socialist Standard

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EDUCATION, SOCIALISM AND THE CLASSROOM STRUGGLE



UNEMPLOYMENT
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Education and socialism

Conditioned assumptions and prejudices instilled during the earliest, most formative years of childhood induce, in later life, a profound hostility to socialist ideas. Adult attitudes and social behaviour are unwittingly based, in every minute detail, upon those contrived conceptions, painstakingly taught in the first years of life.

A young child's anguished cry on being prevented from taking home and playing with some toy it has been conditioned to enjoy but which its parents cannot afford, marks natural hostility to a scheme of organisation not designed to cater for the needs of the majority of its participants. But this cry of discontent is soon transformed, by thorough social conditioning, into a whimper of begrudging but tolerant humility.

In their years of almost total dependence, of weak reliance and therefore great susceptibility, young children are forcefully and persistently taught that there is a superior, external, mystic force governing our every move. It is proclaimed that the way in which society is presently organised is the only way it ever has been, or could be, organised. Such damaging and unfounded myths would be seriously questioned by young, fertile minds; but they are also discouraged from the start to use any kind of logical or objective reasoning when it comes to matters of such immense human import. Consideration of cause and effect is reserved for use in the science laboratories.

The current failure of humanity to organise for its own survival without recurrent periods of organised mass destruction of life during wars is presented as a failure which must continue in the future. The education system turns out individuals with a profound comprehension of atomic particles or astrophysics but who suffer a blind spot when it comes to matters like the social satisfaction of human needs.

Neo-Malthusian myths of scarcity are swallowed gullibly by scientists conditioned in the schools and universities. Poverty amid plenty, and all the contradictions of capitalism, are written off glibly as due to "human nature" or "man's basic evil". If any schoolchild points a finger at the system itself and rejects the obscure moral conundrums of religious mythology, then they are swiftly silenced and told to get on with their work. At school, children are taught to chant nursery rhymes, keep in line, follow leaders. Individuality, originality or dissent is often punished as "disobedience" or "disruption".

When socialists propose the establishment of a system of society without national frontiers or governments,

buying or selling, wages or profits, the negative responses this often elicits result from a fastidious process of indoctrination undergone from the very moment of birth. Apart from the crude exhortations of the media to pledge support for the profit system, there is also a much more insidious and subtle persuasion which begins long before its victim can read. This is based upon emotion and psychological obsession rather than on any rational argument. It has to be, for the prolonging of capitalism cannot be defended by rational argument.

In a hideous regeneration of misery, children are taught by the adults whom they most trust, the parents who have produced and protected them, that the set of social relations into which they were born must remain as they are for the whole of their lives. This harsh rule of acceptance is sometimes expressed in a modified form, when socialists meet with the objection: "It could never happen in my life time."

The means have long been at hand to provide a material abundance sufficient to supply all the needs of the world's population. In 1976 the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation stated that enough grain is now produced to provide everyone on earth with as much as 3,000 calories a day, taking no account of any other available foodstuffs. At the same time, more than a quarter of the earth's population is on the brink of starvation. The implications of such facts are not taught in schools. It is the profit system, in which food is actually destroyed to maintain prices and profits, and in which vast human resources are consumed in the unnecessary domains of war, coercion, finance and commerce, which is responsible for the untold suffering of those not born of propertied parents.

Socialism, production for need, based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means of wealth production and distribution, is not just immediately possible and practicable, it is also an urgent necessity, long overdue. All that is lacking for the institution of a system in which all will enjoy free access to the wealth we produce, is conscious, working-class political action. It *can* and must happen "in our life times". Any other attitude is a concession to the bleak and impotent outlook the capitalist class hopes will confront its employees.

A socialist is generally one who has experienced a process of complete mental reconstruction. Years of thoroughly impregnated prejudices and attitudes towards social behaviour must be overcome. But as workers develop awareness of where their interests lie,

the whole ideology of capitalism will be rejected lock, stock and barrel; in the schools as much as in the offices and factories. With a rational alternative to contrast with the system they had been taught to accept as the sole possibility, schoolchildren will consciously discard the body of misconceptions and myths they are offered.

Currently, self-styled "rebels" throw off school uniforms only promptly to don their own uniforms, as dictated to them by the fashion industry. These angry young people are accommodated by capitalism; the fundamental myth of the inevitability of a system of wage-labour is left intact. But as consciousness develops, the young, fertile mind will readily rebut the anarchic structure of the capitalist mode of production. The cry of a discontented child must become not a snivel of acceptance, but a defiant declaration for socialism.

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The classroom struggle

My schooldays were recent enough to remember and they were not the happiest days of my life. The compulsion to pay attention to pompous lectures about what is "right" and what is "wrong"; the competitive tension of examinations whereby friends become rivals for an advanced position in the employment queue; the deceit and ignorance upon which much of modern learning is based. I learnt three important things while at school—how to hide from authority; how to read a good book while pretending to be listening to the teacher; and above all, how to rejoice in the abnormality which is officially scorned by the system of mass education.

The message of the Socialist Party of Great Britain is for all members of the class which owns little more than its ability to work and is therefore forced to sell its labour power to an employer in order to live. We do not discriminate between young members of the working class who are still being trained for wage slavery and those who have graduated from education into full-time exploitation. It is your common class position to which we appeal, not your age or your experience. To become a socialist does not require grey hairs or five "O" levels, but an understanding of the society you live in and a commitment to change it. If you are still at school, you can contribute towards making a better future for yourself no less valuably than any other worker; you will find no discrimination on the basis of age in the socialist movement.

1. THE PURPOSE OF COMPULSORY SCHOOLING

Schools are not there so that young people can freely learn and be turned into informed, mature human beings. Only the liberal educationalists who earn their bread and butter out of the blackboard jungle perpetuate the myth that education is about freedom and fulfilment. Schools exist to train you for your class role. Because the vast majority of people are destined to be wage or salary workers the job of schools is to give us training in working class skills and values. Boys are taught how to make things from wood and repair cars; girls are given a basic training in domestic skills. They teach us to read (good for machine instructions and understanding the lies of the newspapers), to count, add and subtract (necessary for industrial workers), to know about geography (through the nationalist eyes of the British ruling class) and history (where content is selected and, by careful emphasis and

omission, the past becomes the story of kings, lords and war victories instead of workers, peasants, strikes and revolutions). They teach us to keep fit in a competitive form of warfare called sport. And they are legally bound to teach us religion (the only compulsory subject) so that we will accept their class morality.

Schools have always been the property of the ruling class and they have always served to inculcate into the mass of people the ideas of the rulers. The first schools in England were in the sixth century and their purpose was to train monks and priests to spread propaganda about those parts of the Bible of use to the feudal ruling class. The Roman Catholic Church, which controlled European education in the Middle Ages, was so fearful that literacy might be used to examine any ideas but its own that it officially supported a policy of mass illiteracy. The following extract from a letter from Pope Gregory to Bishop Desiderius of Gaul illustrates such fear of the power of literacy:

"A circumstance came to our notice which cannot be mentioned without shame, namely that you, our brother, give lessons in [Latin] grammar. This news caused us such annoyance and disgust that all our joy at the good we had heard earlier was turned to sorrow and distress, since the same lips cannot sing the praise of Jove as the praise of Christ. Consider yourself how serious and shocking it is that a bishop should pursue an activity unthinkable even for a pious layman. We have already in hand the granting of your request, easy in mind and untroubled by doubts, provided that this information which has come to us shall have been

proved manifestly untrue, and you shall not be shown to spend your time on the follies of secular literature."

The Pope was right to fear the consequences of mass literacy, for it was the invention of the printing press and the growth of literature in the vernacular which contributed greatly to the popular dismissal of Catholicism in the sixteenth century.

The growth of industrial capitalism in the late eighteenth century produced a requirement for a workforce educated in the three Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic). At first, the ruling class was slow to perceive its economic needs and some of them had a medieval fear of educating the poor:

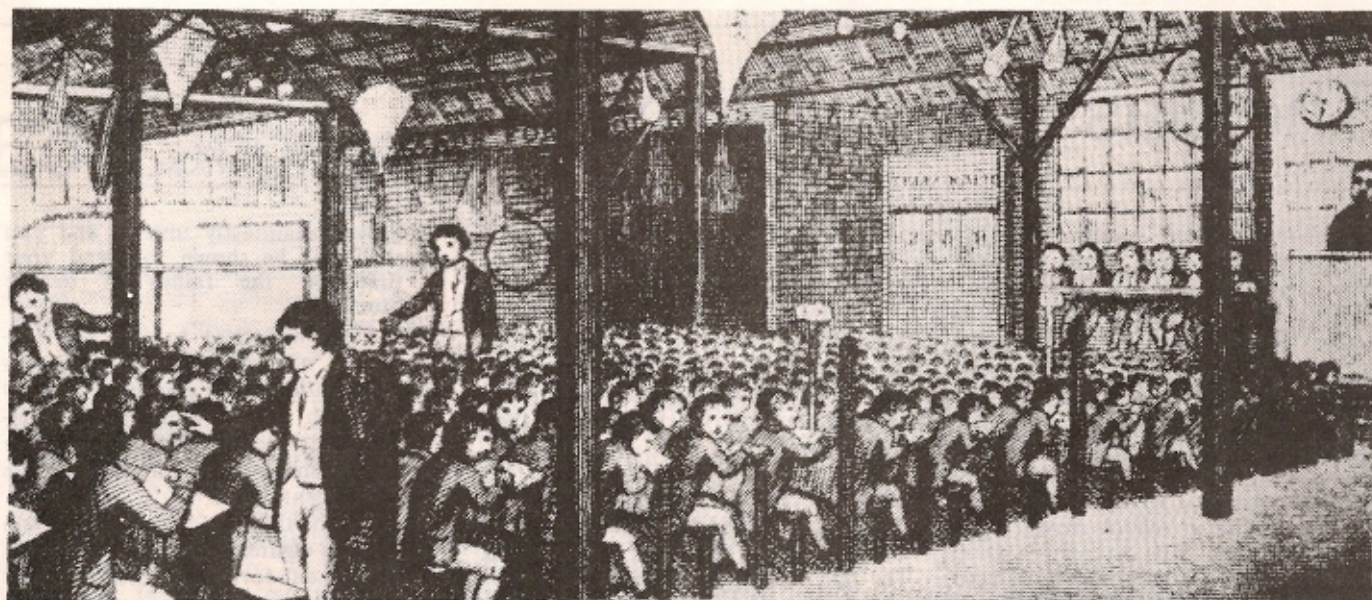
"It is doubtless desirable that the poor should be instructed in reading, if it were only for the best of purposes—that they may read the Scriptures. As to writing and arithmetic, it may be apprehended that such a degree of knowledge would produce in them a derelish for the laborious occupations of life."

(*Justice of the Peace*, 1807. Quoted by R. Williams in *The Long Revolution*)

Robert Lowe MP, Vice President of the government's Education Department in the 1860s, was in favour of educating the poor, but not for philanthropic motives:

"The lower classes ought to be educated to discharge the duties cast upon them. They should also be educated that they may appreciate and defer to a higher cultivation when they meet it, and the higher classes ought to be educated in a very different manner, in order that they may exhibit to the lower classes that





A London school, 1839

higher education to which, if it were shown to them, they would bow down. . . ."

(*Primary and Classical Education*)

The modern comprehensive school fulfils this role admirably. Young workers are taught practical skills to enable us to 'discharge the duties cast upon' us. The importance of punctuality (getting to work on time), not talking while working, passive obedience to authority, ability to memorise so-called facts, and repetition of dogma are all part of the preparation for wage slavery. They teach us history, but not *our* history from *our* angle. State education is an attempt to nationalise the minds of the working class.

It is not only in Britain and the West that education serves the needs of the ruling class. In Russia, China and the other state capitalist countries young workers are taught the virtues of employment, deference and nationalism, the only difference being that it is all done in the name of socialism. In Russian schools, where the boring memoirs of Tsar Brezhnev are now compulsory reading (like the Bible in Britain), many students have become cynical towards the elite bureaucracy that dictates over them—a cynicism they share with many young members of the working class throughout the world. Even in South Africa, where the racist system of apartheid has tended to blind capitalists to their economic needs, there is growing recognition by the ruling class that their overriding objective must be to produce profitable wage slaves, regardless of colour. Harry Oppenheimer, South Africa's leading industrialist (he is head of De Beers diamond and Anglo-American gold mining combines) is reported to have urged the Botha government to get rid of apartheid in education:

"... Mr. Botha must bring the electorate to recognise that racial discrimination and free enterprise are basically incompatible. . . the educa-

tion issue threatens to prevent the rapid and peaceful development of the country because it creates an 'acute and growing shortage' of skilled workers."

(*Guardian*, 14th July, 1980)

This is not to say that the existence of schools is a bad thing for the working class. If you use your brain to serve your own material interests, some of what you learn at school can help you. It depends on what you study, what conclusions you draw and how far you are able to sort out the prejudices from the facts. Literacy can be a powerful weapon, opening a path to the study of the world around you, but it can also be a path to a lifetime of *Daily Express* editorials and Harold Robbins paperbacks.

2. CLASS INEQUALITY IN SCHOOLING

Capitalist education is unequal and the introduction of comprehensive education has not eradicated that inequality. In the days when male children were divided up at eleven into manual workers-to-be who were sent to secondary modern schools to learn woodwork and arithmetic, and the potential managers and professionals who went to the grammar schools to learn Latin and Chaucer, it was the claim of liberal reformers that comprehensive education would remove such inequality. This idea was based on the popular illusion that education determines class, whereas in fact education tends to reflect class. Inequality still exists in comprehensive schools between the poorest sections of the working class and the less poor (who often imagine themselves to be middle class). In many areas two-level schooling has continued, with the better-off parents sending their children to the better equipped, less rowdy schools near to where they live, while the children of the slums and the council estates end up in the worst schools.

The real division in education is not *within* the working class, but between the state education provided for the workers and the paid public schools for the sons and daughters of the parasites who own the means of living. Still Crabbe's dictum applies:

To every class we have a school assign'd;

Rules for all ranks and food for every mind.

We have described the purpose of working class education, but what about the public schools with their spacious grounds, academic excellence and conditioned snobbery? They teach young capitalists the exact opposite to what we learn in the comprehensives: we learn to follow, they learn to lead; we learn to save money, they learn to invest and spend it; we learn how to be brave soldiers, they learn how to be distant Generals; we learn to respect property, they learn to own and control it. The public schools teach people to be superior to those not in their class. Entry to the capitalist class is not determined by competitive examination, by having better minds or working harder or having more initiative than anyone else—it is simply determined by the ownership of inherited wealth. Eton and Harrow contain some of the biggest morons on the face of the earth, but they are morons with fancy clothes, big family homes, posh accents, daddies in the City and, above all, plenty of money to invest in the labour power of the working class.

One in five members of the present Conservative government went to one of three of the top fee-paying schools in Britain. An analysis conducted by C. S. Wilson and T. Lupton in the 1950s showed that Eton alone produced 30 per cent of Conservative Ministers, of the directors of large banks, of the directors of City firms, and of the directors of insurance companies. Eton, Winchester, Harrow, Rugby, Charter-



house and Marlborough between them produced between two-fifths and half of the holders of the above-mentioned posts. Jean Blondel, in his study of *Voters, Parties and Leaders*, points out that:

"The 25 to 30 per cent of old Etonians whom one finds in a Conservative cabinet, in banks, in the insurance companies, have greater influence than their numbers warrant, because, being old Etonians, they have more contacts. They supply information about other old Etonians who are influential in other walks of life; they are go-betweens, they are instruments of compromises in the sector of British political, social and economic life in which they are numerous." (p. 24)

While capitalists spend millions of pounds on getting their children a superior education, the government tells us that it must cut expenditure on schooling because it stands to reason that nuclear bombs must be a higher social priority than school books. In the present economic recession, which is an endemic feature of capitalism, you can expect your standard of schooling to markedly drop. The June 1979 budget cut £55 million from central government spending on education and the November 1979 White Paper on public spending announced a cut in real terms of £240 million for education. This will amount to the loss of 18,000 teachers in England and Wales and increased charges for—or the withdrawal of—school meals, milk and transport. This is happening at a time when, according to the Department of Education, there is a shortage of 4,000 mathematics teachers, 2,000 physical science teachers, 2,000 craft, design and technology teachers and 1,600 language teachers.

3. REVOLUTION, NOT REBELLION

Revolution is a mysterious term. Most of us are taught at school to understand it in relation to the capitalist revolutions of the past. The French Revolution of 1789 is most people's idea of what revolution is all about: barricades, bayonets, blood, slogans, heroic leaders and a new regime, not much different from the old one. That is not what socialists mean by revolution.

By social revolution we mean a conscious change in social relationships from those based upon private or state ownership of the means of wealth production and distribution to common ownership and democratic control of the world around us. The socialist revolution will mean the instant abolition of class divisions, the wages system, private property, and the need for money. It is a big aim, but it presents the only alternative to the present world system of capitalism.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain states as a matter of principle that the establishment of the new social order can only be possible when a majority of the world's workers consciously understand and want it. Once majority consciousness arises, nothing can stop the conquest of power by the working class.

The tensions and contradictions of working class life under capitalism tend to lead more and more workers to question the *status quo*. This critical thought is essential, for once you start to formulate questions, you are half way to knowing the answers. But capitalism has an immense capacity for accommodating working class discontent and dissent and it is often able to convert challenging resistance into sterile rebelliousness.

The Labour Party Young Socialists, the left wing romanticists and cam-

paigns for reforms have wasted the political energies of millions of working class youths. They have grown weary trying to do what none has done before them—to make the slaughter house fit for the cattle. In their late twenties the participants in the reformist movement grow tired and drop their radical poses, claiming to have grown out of such youthful fancies as wishing for a better world to live in. The system has converted them into regular channels of dissent and they end up as conservative, acquiescent workers.

It is not only into overtly political blind allies that young workers can be led. The so-called 'alternative culture' is, on the whole, just another capitalist rip-off. You drop out of one oppressive way of life and into another. Escape via rock music or art is often at best merely pretentious and at worst an excuse for someone to get rich quick. Escape through drugs or alcohol is a boost to those who profit from human self-destruction, but ultimately serves to stupefy workers and blind them to their condition. Youth cults have been used to make money out of despair, while regimenting youths into easily identifiable mass fashions: while the hippies sang of peace and love, the drug pushers dreamed of dollars; skinhead culture, with its frustrated racism and know-nothing nationalism, did its recruits little good in the dole queue; and as for the punk 'New Wave'—what's the use of walking around with a safety pin up your nose if you still face all the poverty and degradation of being a wage slave? Some young workers still turn in frustration to the empty skies and the empty churches for an answer, often ending up on the wrong end of the exploitation game in the Moonies, the scientologists or in a temple devoted to a guru. To really challenge the conservatism of this system, it's not new cults we need, but liberated minds.

Mind liberation is not the same as

women's liberation (women wage slaves being exploited on the same terms as men). It means thinking about what is in your own material interest and joining with those in a common social position to do something about it. Punks, junkies and lefties can be well accommodated within the capitalist system. Socialist consciousness cannot be accommodated within capitalism: not until we have a system of society run in the human interest will socialists be content.

What, then, will be the position of young people in a socialist society? Of course, the social revolution will not alter human biology and make young humans look the same as older ones. Neither will it remove the need for those who are young to learn certain skills and acquire certain information as part of their development into adulthood. The difference in socialism will be that the young will no longer be conditioned from birth for class roles; no longer will those who are old have power over those who are young because they pay for them; no longer will education be only for the young, but instead will be seen as a lifelong process for all to enjoy the constant quest for knowledge; no longer will authoritarian discipline exist in schools, for the basis of socialism will be co-operative self-discipline; no longer will those being educated be forced to accept dogma in an uncritical fashion, for the need to inculcate norms into children will have disappeared.

Socialism will open up one new possibility which has hitherto been denied to the sons and daughters of the wealth-producing class: the right to be different, to assert individuality, to be eccentric and to be visionaries.

S COLEMAN

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Secondary schools: educating for conformity

At the time of writing, a by no means insignificant proportion of the nation's young, along with their parents, friends and relations, are holding their breath. The cause of this trauma, which occurs annually, is the impending announcement of the 'O' and 'A' level examination results.

Ever since the examination answers were written, markers drawn from the ranks of the teaching profession—retired and active—have been busily scratching away with their black and red pencils. Their job is to sort out the relative merits or demerits of the scripts they have been given and to deliver the 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down' as the occasion warrants.

And a great deal hangs in the balance. Some students wish to enter their sixth-forms to attempt the next hurdle. Others have a conditional offer of a place at a university or a polytechnic. Many more hope to enter industry or commerce, or the "public" services. All, however, share an overriding concern: the nature and quality of the meal-ticket they must, if they are to live, acquire at the end of it all. For this is what the exercise is all about. Put another way; what, in effect, is happening is the 'intellectual' classification of the working class for and on behalf of the only other class—the capitalists.

It is important to remember also that by far the larger proportion of working class youngsters have already been weeded out. They are now performing the intellectually less-demanding—and usually lower paid—tasks imposed upon them by their capitalist masters and by their own circumstances. Or—more likely—they are unemployed.

From the foregoing it is evident that it is at examination time that education most clearly reveals itself in its true guise—as a transparent device for facilitating the grading and selection of wealth-producing units (sometimes described as 'hands') in the capitalist machine. We can forget all that cant about a 'broadening of the intellect'; or the 'widening of one's cultural awareness'; or the 'ability to express oneself'; or 'the flowering of one's personality'. Teachers may sincerely believe that such inflated and plainly hypocritical claptrap is the prime purpose of their ministrations: it's a dead certainty that the employers and their executive committee, the government, do not.

And if it appears that the three r's are receiving less attention than, in the eyes of the prospective employers, they ought, then we can confidently expect some political hack at the Department of Education and Science to launch a campaign to put matters right. (Under Labour this duty was enthusiastic-

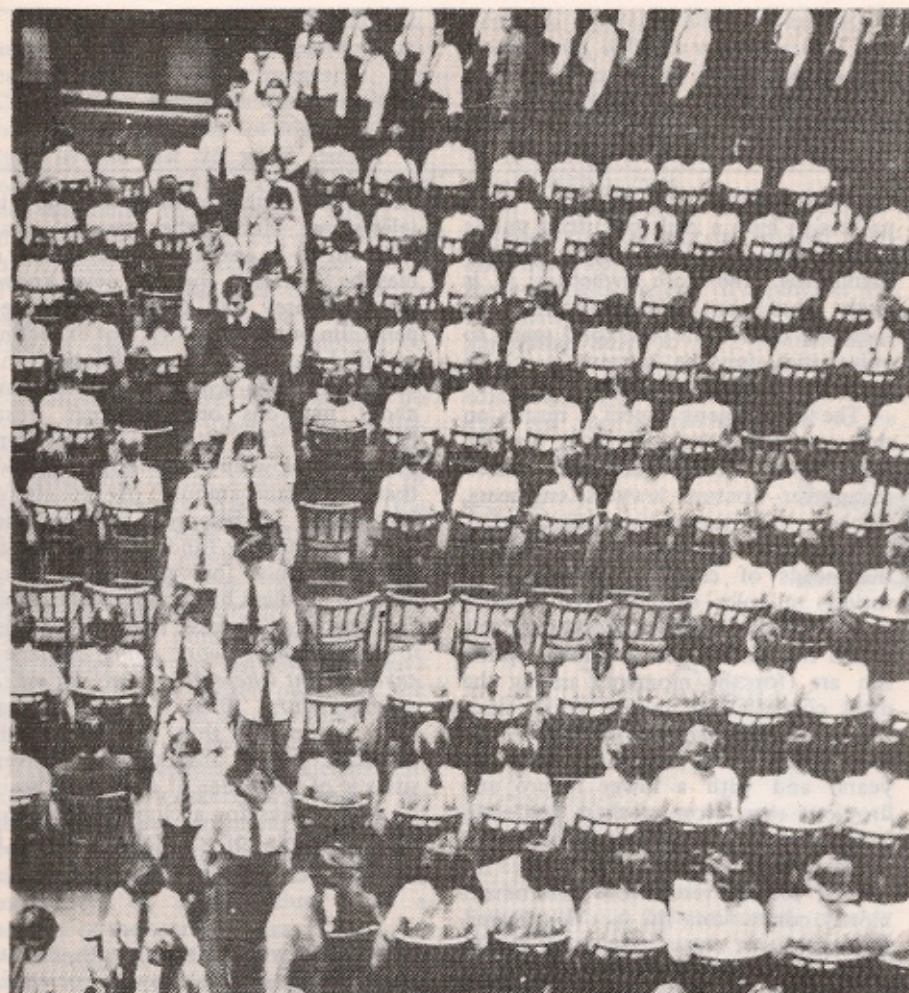
ally prosecuted by that darling of the media and *doyenne* of the Labour Party's right wing, Shirley Williams).

It is no accident that the practice of, and instruction in, religion is compulsory in schools. This has been and remains a bare-faced and utterly cynical attempt on the part of the master-class to inculcate in the minds of young people a suitably docile and submissive attitude towards life under capitalism. Usury; exploitation; power-seeking and corruption in high places; culminating in the conditioning of the working class to accept war, with its possibility of a nuclear holocaust: such things require a foundation in 'morality' if our masters are going to get away with it. The Church and its handmaidens, the educators, have always proved ready and willing to perform the useful task of supplying it. It is relatively unimportant that the vast majority of young people reject out of hand the ridiculous incantations of the 'lay brethren' in their schools; (most of whom don't believe a word of it themselves anyway); the fact remains that capitalism will have been provided with a mask of respectability, however superficial.

Another necessary pre-condition in the process of training the workforce of the future is an unquestioning acceptance of competition as an essential fact of life. In the majority of schools this is taken for granted. There have to be winners and losers no matter what the consequences. The humiliation and sense of failure which afflicts so many of 'education's' victims, so often expressed in belligerence or apathy, are accepted as unfortunate but unavoidable side-effects.

In fact, this state of affairs constitutes the beginning of a deliberate process which is essential to capitalism's survival—the division and sub-division of the working class against itself. (And what could be more dangerous and alarming to the capitalist class than a workforce which stands united in a common interest and understanding, alert to its conditions as a class and ready and willing to subject that condition to critical scrutiny?).

Schools, then, can be compared to the nurseryman's greenhouse; by the time the seedlings have reached the stage where they are ready to be introduced to the harsher environment of the garden a great deal of thinning out will have been achieved. The tougher plants will have been suitably conditioned to face their new circumstances. Likewise the products of our schools, moulded into shape and unquestioning in their acceptance of the society into which they were born, are ready to join the bigger rat-race of the world of work. Those who enter the institutions of



'higher learning' are as yet one stage removed from this world; the remainder, compliant and unrebelling, are only too ready to sell their labour power to the highest bidder—or to don the uniforms of capitalism's forces of oppression and repression.

It is clear that this is possible only up to a certain point: the capitalists may have no call for the services of the school-leaver. This is the case at the present time. Capitalism is in the latest of a lengthening line of periodic crises. Unable to find markets for its increasingly uncompetitive commodities it reduces production or closes it down altogether, throwing workers on the dole. And if there is less demand for 'educated' workers there is clearly less need to spend as much as hitherto on schools and schooling; hence the harshness of the education cuts. (No doubt when boom time comes around once more, new cash will be forthcoming to pay for the higher standards which will then be demanded).

So what do the employers get for their money? (and it is their money which, in the form of taxation, pays the educators to do their preparatory work for them).

The first thing they get is choice. They are now able to select from the available pool of suitably sieved and classified labour and brain power those qualities and skills which, following a further period of training and conditioning (but minus the religious bunkum, of

course) are best calculated to provide them with the highest return. Or they can, if they happen to be, say, the Home Office or the Ministry of Defence, select potential policemen or soldiers or whatever, from among those who by background, inclination and malleability are most likely to prove reliable in their determination to conform to and co-operate with the *status quo*.

Another quality the employers can be confident of commanding is a fair degree of punctuality and endurance. The school day is deliberately designed to match, more or less, the normal working day its charges will later experience. Children who have 'clocked on' at their school for many years are conditioned to accept without query clocking on at their future place of employment. And having arrived they are unlikely to abscond—especially if the result of any such absenteeism is a loss of earnings and/or the receipt of their cards.

Again, young people who have been subjected to the approved interpretation of economic and social life under capitalism, and who have been carefully shielded from any objective and free discussion of possible alternatives, are hog-tied. With no basis upon which to challenge the existing order of society they are neutered before they are even able to begin the inevitable struggle with their future exploiters. (The unemployed will have received the same conditioning and, provided they can be kept

sweet, they offer the capitalists a fine opportunity to keep down wage-costs in the scramble for jobs).

What, then, must we learn from our school-days? It is that compulsory secondary education, contrary to what we are frequently led to believe, is not primarily intended to benefit its recipients. Its main purpose is to provide the capitalists with a docile work-force, trained and conditioned up to a level necessary to achieve the highest possible rate of profit. Alternatively, the 'educators' must supply the ruling class with the obedient and conformist policemen, soldiers, civil servants, and so on, essential to its surviving as a class. These conditions are obtainable only given a thorough grounding in competition, doctored history and phoney moral rectitude, backed up by coercion—with or without corporal punishment. Success can be achieved only given the absence of a proper examination of alternatives, and in circumstances which preclude truly hostile or analytical questioning in open debate. Such a regime is amply exemplified by our secondary schools.

RICHARD COOPER

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Universities today

Universities today are not what they were. But then what would you expect of institutions which have existed in Europe for six or seven centuries?

Originally, universities were scholastic guilds, similar to trade guilds in protecting the interests of their members. These were often foreigners who had come together to study in a particular place and were in need of protection from the extortion of the townspeople. Towards the end of the fourteenth century the guilds came to be recognised by civil and church authorities and to receive licences to teach. Today, universities are huge institutions, often employing several thousand workers, which take millions of pounds to run, find their place in a whole network of other social institutions, and ultimately serve the interests of the ruling class in capitalist society.

The extent to which universities are bound up with the wider capitalist society (in contradiction to the ivory tower image so firmly set in popular imagination) can be gauged by the statements of influential members of the ruling class. Stuart Sexton, political adviser to the Secretary of State for Education, recently said that over the next decade there would be a reassertion of the obligation of higher education to meet national needs. But these are hard times, and the chairman of IBM (UK), said more bluntly (and more threateningly) that unless the relation between education and industry improved, industry would not be successful and there would be no money to fund education. While the need to make things and to sell them has become the cornerstone of survival, he complained, incense had been burned at the altar of scholarship.

He obviously knows a thing or two about what makes capitalism tick. But the present Prime Minister is not noted

for soft-heartedness and she does profess to have a zeal for cutting public expenditure. Readers may judge for themselves, therefore, whether it is likely that she would sanction the spending of £987m (the total grant to universities for the current year) to make a nice smell at the altar.

The government expect a return on this money and they will get it. First, in the shape of the production of skilled manpower—doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, and others whose mental training will have made them adaptable to the needs of capitalist society in a variety of roles such as civil servant, personnel officer, social worker. In this regard the universities of British capitalism are (for the moment) among the most cost-effective in the world, since they produce qualified graduates in a shorter time than most (usually three years) and with a lower failure and drop-out rate. Most of these graduates (over 60 per cent) go directly into industry and commerce.

The second return on government money comes from the fact that universities exist not only to teach but also to engage in research. It is here that there is a slim connection with the origin of universities and a grain of truth in the ivory tower image. "Research" covers many different types of activity in widely varying areas, from ancient history to nuclear physics. Some research will be merely scholarly, and if it has any worth it will have it simply as an addition to the culture in which we live. Some will involve work to find a definite solution to a definite problem. And some may or may not have any practical application, but it will not be possible to tell in advance.

This last point is important. There is research currently going on at Glasgow University into hepatitis and cirrhosis, and at Hull into liquid crystal displays

which may replace cathode ray tubes in televisions. Much other research may turn out to be useful in these ways or it may be "useless". But one never knows which. Florey and Chain investigated penicillin out of curiosity, not expecting to find a systemic antibiotic, and Rutherford was criticised for bothering about neutrons only fourteen years before the first atomic bombs were exploded. Now any businessman knows that a certain amount of speculative investment of resources is inevitable, and consequently funds are made available not only for research on some definite problem but also for speculative and possibly "useless" research. That is, *it pays to have work going on in an environment where people are not asked at every turn "Does it pay?"* (It has been estimated that the immediate financial profit produced by universities is of the order of £500m.) This in its turn makes for a climate where, by the standards of capitalism, there is relatively free discussion.

*

As one would expect with institutions closely bound up with society in this way, their recent history has broadly followed the fortunes of British capitalism. In the boom years of the 1960s, when demand for skilled manpower was very high, the number of universities increased from 23 to 44, with a particular increase in those chiefly concerned with technological subjects. The Robbins Report proclaimed that higher education should be available to anyone qualified to pursue it, and student numbers rose rapidly. Along with this went a change in the undergraduate image, from a pipe-smoking, tweed-jacketed "chap" to a long-haired, jean-wearing hippy. The majority of students were probably never either.

The Exam!



But booms are followed by slumps, and this era of rapid expansion has come to an end with a vengeance. The CBI has given notice that the proportion of national resources for higher education in the last 20 years cannot be sustained in the 1980s. The government has responded to the piper's calling of the tune by cutting £17½m off the universities' recurrent grant for 1979/80, which was itself based on the laughable underestimate of an inflation rate of 8½ per cent. The number of qualified 18-year-olds continues to rise, but universities have been ordered no longer to increase their intake. A discussion paper prepared under the chairmanship of the Vice-Chancellor of Sussex University has spoken of the possibility of losing 60 staff posts in two years and needing to find £1m-£2m from somewhere. These are bare facts and figures which have to be translated into human experience. All universities over the last few years have been affected by frozen posts and the policy of leaving vacancies unfilled. This means that at all levels—teaching, secretarial, maintenance, technicians and kitchen staff—workers have had to do more work and, given inflation, for a smaller real wage or salary. This is, quite simply, increased exploitation, increased extraction of surplus-value from a section of the working class.

Effects on students are more varied, since not all students are members of the working class. The ruling class have to educate their offspring somewhere, and the more prestigious universities are one of the places they choose. Sons and daughters of industrialists and cabinet ministers and the like, can be found quite easily at Oxford and Cambridge (though not, say, at Strathclyde or Essex). Perhaps this is what led one academic to refer to Oxford as at once a centre of high-powered thought and a finishing school. Which role it has for any particular student becomes apparent when the time comes to leave. At Bristol University (one of the more prestigious) 3 per cent of graduates from one faculty declared themselves "not available for employment". For them, the garden parties held to celebrate their obtaining a degree can go on for the rest of the summer and the rest of their lives. For the rest, it will be the basic, inescapable condition of being a worker: they will have to find someone prepared to buy their labour power, and their fear is likely to be the opposite one of employment not being available for them. Being a highly

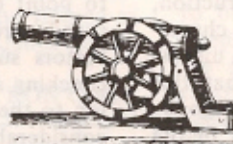
educated worker is no proof against the dole queue, and this was illustrated by a recent report in *The Times*. Five hundred young people turned up for eight jobs in a clothes shop in Sheffield at £32.50 per week, and they included several with degrees.

In 1968 the year of phoney revolutions, universities in Britain and elsewhere were headline news. Though some thought the end of capitalism was at hand, the upheavals in them amounted only to civil disturbances, since they involved questioning only some aspects of capitalist society. They also fed the pernicious belief to be

found in some left-wing circles that an intellectual elite is needed to produce a socialist revolution. Intellectuals, and especially left-wing intellectuals, should never be encouraged in their vice of exaggerating their own importance in that way. High intelligence and a brilliant mind can and do coexist with pathetic ignorance of the true nature of our political and social system. The workers by brain have no special insight, but they have no special immunity from social conditions either, and they will join forces with other workers when all finally realise where their class interest lies.

BILL VALINAS

Briefing



The Open University

The Open University offers home-based higher education for adults. It demands no entry qualifications and offers places on a first come-first served principle. Since 1971 it has admitted roughly 20,000 undergraduate students each January, and a growing number of associate and short course students. It has a total student body of over 70,000; and over 40,000 still apply each year for places.

Undergraduate students build their degrees on the 'credit' system, choosing almost any combination from over a hundred courses to gain six credits for an ordinary BA and eight for honours. Courses are offered in the Arts, Social Sciences, Mathematics, Science, Technology and Education. The average student can manage the work of about one credit a year by doing about fifteen hours study a week. The bulk of the reading is from well prepared correspondence texts which are also on sale in bookshops. This is supplemented on most courses by radio and television broadcasts or tapes, tutorials at a local study centre, and a week's summer school held at one of the campus universities in the long vacation. Examination is by a combination of continuous assessment and a final three-hour paper for each course.

Undergraduate fees are government subsidised but still cost the student £67 for a full credit course. The cost of set books varies, but is additional, as is postage, travel, and some items of equipment such as calculators. The expensive home experiment kits used in some courses are loaned to students. Summer school costs £62 this year but many local education authorities and some employers pay this plus travelling expenses. The University itself has a financial assistance fund for students who cannot afford the fees.

The headquarters of the Open University is in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. This is largely a course production and administrative centre, despatching about 62,500 packages a week to students. There are thirteen regional offices in the country providing local services and personal contact. Tutorial and counselling support in the regions is provided by more than 5,000 teachers employed part-time.

Of the students who sit the end-of-year examinations, around 90 per cent pass; but a gradually increasing percentage are failing to get as far as the examination on post foundation level courses. In 1979 only about 60 per cent of those who paid their fees for these courses gained credits. There may be a number of reasons for this: decreasing educational preparedness in the people now applying to the OU; increasing economic pressures affecting workers' jobs and family life; or the decreasing level of personal support provided by the University as government economies bite deeper.

The Open University is not expected to show a profit, but it is expected to be 'cost effective'—cheap to run. Those workers who had an inadequate school education; who have great difficulty in sparing the time and the money for courses; whose family problems, shift work and short holidays make them too tired and harassed to devote their minds to study, and who lack the nerve and the know-how to demand their money's worth when they do—these are the ones who 'drop out'.

About 40,000 students have now obtained degrees through OU part-time study, in spite of the difficulties. This is an indication, not only of the amount of enthusiasm that exists among workers for rigorous intellectual effort, but also of the amount of unrecognised brain power that still lies dormant in a class which seems to think that it does not have the intelligence to set up and run a social system in its own interests.

RON COOK

Any readers of the *Socialist Standard* who will be at the University of London in October and would like information about meetings there should contact B. Philips at Head Office. Details of the first series will appear in our October issue.

Intelligence is not understanding

Is a child born with a certain level of intelligence or is it acquired, through upbringing and education? Or perhaps some of both? Arguments over this question are common, and they indicate the extent to which the concept of "intelligence" has been accepted as a reality.

The more deeply we dig, however, the clearer it becomes that "intelligence" is a fairly recent construction, rather than any objective mental characteristic or ability which has been discovered. It becomes clear, also, that this construction or invention of intelligence plays an increasingly large part in the control and running of modern capitalism.

Through the widespread use of intelligence tests and a complex examinations structure young workers are selected, streamed and paced through their education, training and jobs. Moreover, the idea of "intelligence" has become the core of an ideology which contends that every child actually has equality of opportunity; that the "best" will rise to the top; and that these deserve to be paid the highest salaries and given the greatest admiration. It is an ideology that (like the growing cult of sport) encourages intensified competition and the acceptance of a hierarchy throughout the working class in all capitalist countries.

"To Ford a degree signifies proven intellectual capabilities. We train graduates from a wide variety of disciplines to become some of the most professional and achievement orientated managers in British industry, and our management training is recognised as one of the most fertile breeding grounds for top management professionals.

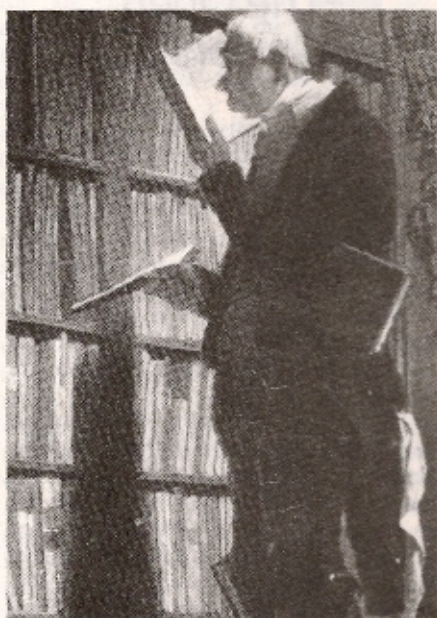
The quality of these managers has helped Ford to emerge and remain as one of the most successful companies in Britain. . .

(*Graduate Opportunities* 1979)

In this advertisement, the Ford Motor Company was trying to buy trained intelligence like the commodity it is, but at the same time to present the illusion that to dedicate all your enthusiasm, loyalty and hard work to the rat-race of increasing Ford's profits at the expense of competitors is a fulfilling, satisfying life. These managers are to become the top-paid workers who control and pressurise workers lower down the hierarchy to produce more, better, faster, cheaper.

Here, in these watchwords of capitalist production, is one clue to definition of "intelligence". In the introduction to *Check Your Own I.Q.* by Professor H. J. Eysenck, he says (p. 15), "When we analyse performance on intelligence tests in some detail, we find

that there is one outstanding characteristic which more than any other determines success or failure. This characteristic is mental speed." And then he shows where he stands in the "nature/nurture" argument by finishing the paragraph, "This all-pervasive mental speed, I would say, is the fundamental, inherited basis for intellectual differences between people." Then he goes on to point out that the effects of mental speed are modified by personality factors such as persistence and care in checking answers. He also draws attention to the fact that practice can make a considerable difference to the scores people achieve; and, because he regards it as an impossibility to keep intelli-



gence tests totally secret, advocates the alternative policy of making them as widely known and used as possible.

Eysenck makes the crucial point about intelligence testing, however, in response to criticisms about the partiality of tests:

To obtain a reasonable measure, therefore, we must have a certain homogeneity of motivation, background training, set, experience and knowledge; no intelligence test is universally valid but applies only to a given sub-set of the population. Know Your Own I. Q., as well as the present book, was intended for literate, English-reading people, between the ages of eighteen and fifty or sixty, with above average IQs and a corresponding minimum degree of schooling.

As he develops his argument it becomes obvious that the way intelligence tests are designed discriminates in favour of those adults and children who come from families which are already relatively successful and ambitious in

competitive capitalist society and who have accepted the values set up for them by their rulers. Intelligence tests do not merely test: they also incessantly validate and reinforce those values. They serve as an instrument of social stability and a means of social control.

There was an upsurge of mental testing of all sorts in the latter half of the nineteenth century in Britain, Europe and America, and it is not difficult to see why. In the sixty years between 1851 and 1911 the population of Great Britain doubled to 18 million; agricultural workers declined from 2 million to 1.5 million, while workers in mining and manufacture doubled to 8.5 million, and workers in services, commerce, transport and communications trebled to 8.3 millions. With such a reproduction of labour power, capitalism badly needed techniques and systems for sorting and grading this labour power. With such an increase in the size of the working class, the capitalist class looked anxiously for a means of social control. Intelligence testing, integrated with the school system, provided an answer to both. In America, H. H. Goddard wrote (*Human Efficiency and Levels of Intelligence*, Princeton University Press, 1920, p. 97), "The disturbing fear is that the masses—the seventy or even eighty-six million—will take matters into their own hands."

In an address delivered to the Fifth Conference on Educational Policies at the New York Teachers College entitled 'How may we improve the selection, training and life work of leaders?' (Columbia University Press, 1939, p. 32) Edward L. Thorndike said, "It is the great good fortune of mankind that there is a substantial correlation between intelligence and morality, including goodwill towards one's fellows. Consequently our superiors in ability are on the average our benefactors, and it is often safer to trust our interests to them than to ourselves." To psychologists like Goddard and Thorndike, Carnegie and Rockefeller gave a continuous stream of money for research and development of tests and school text books. In this way they were able to supplement, and eventually influence, the policies of national and local government in the USA.

This development of a hierarchy of intelligence in all the industrialised capitalist nations is sometimes misleadingly called a meritocracy. Apart from the fact that equating mental speed with merit is cynical even by capitalist standards, the word implies that the people with this sort of merit rule society, which is simply untrue. Intelligence tests and examination ladders are for workers. Capitalists

neither want nor need them; and it is they who rule. They do not even need "intelligence" because they can buy it without difficulty, together with enthusiasm, loyalty and hard work. Indeed, it is ironic that it has been members of the working class, in the middle and higher income brackets, who have been most assiduous in developing and consolidating the intelligence hierarchy in order to enhance their own prestige and fend off competition. Nevertheless, by allowing virtually all the work to be done for them, the capitalist class has given up any pretence at performing a useful function in society. They rule only through their ownership of capital and the fact that the working class continues to operate society according to their laws and in their interests.

"Intelligent" workers do not understand this any better than "unintelligent" workers. As the slump develops, they will be just as bewildered when they are thrown out of a job as the man on the factory floor. When the next war comes, they will have more sophisticated rationalisations for going to fight their masters' battles, but they will die just the same.

Intelligence is not understanding; it is not common sense; it is not awareness; and above all it is not class consciousness. These are the mental abilities the working class must develop if they are to do away with slumps, wars and all the other idiocies of capitalism. Intelligence, defined, selected and trained as it is at present, is a hindrance rather than a help.

RON COOK

Why socialism?

The Socialist Party of Great Britain argues that present-day society is not organised in the interests of the majority of people. We do not say this because we are a bunch of ever-complaining discontents or because we expect perfection in human affairs. We say it because of the plain, undeniable fact that the vast majority of the world's wealth is owned by a tiny minority of the world's population.

If we take the example of this country, we find (according to Royal Commission statistics) that 7 per cent of the population owns over 80 per cent of the wealth. And all productive activity that takes place does so to perpetuate this inequality. The single-figure owning minority we refer to as the "capitalist class". We do not call them this for emotive reasons, but quite simply to describe their function, that of accumulating and investing *capital* with a view to producing goods and services the sale of which will realise a profit.

The large majority who own virtually nothing except their ability to work and the few (usually shoddy) personal possessions (car, furniture, TV, washing machine) which that ability has enabled them to buy we call the "working class". And here we are not just referring to people who work with their hands, but to *all* those whose living depends on a wage or salary. In other words teachers, civil servants, doctors, journalists as well as miners, steelworkers dockers, postmen.

The working class too has a function, that of being exploited by the capitalist class. Once again "exploitation" is not a term we use loosely. By it we mean quite specifically that workers are always worth more to their employers than what they receive as wages or salary. What follows from this furthermore is that no matter how much workers receive for the job they do,

they are only kept in that job so long as their work continues to be a source of profit to their employer. The iron law of the capitalist system is *no profit, no production* and the practical application of this equation is the unemployment caused at times of economic loss or recession, such as at present.

So members of the working class are in a permanently insecure situation. They never know, and neither do employers or governments or economists, when recession will come and quite what the effects will be. At the present time therefore, as the world recession grows deeper, many manual workers (steel, car making) are finding they are superfluous to their employers' profit-making capacity and many workers in non-manual jobs (civil servants, college lecturers) which were formerly thought "secure" are also finding that shrinking markets at the end of the production line mean fewer jobs in their field—the servicing and administration of that production line.

Some would say that economic recession isn't much fun for the capitalists either. And this is quite true. Their profits usually come down and hence their stock of capital is reduced. But unless they are so small as to be squeezed out of business (which does happen on a large scale and causes capital to be concentrated into fewer and fewer hands), recession makes little difference to their life style, for the material benefits they enjoy are derived from only a tiny fraction of their profits. The rest is ploughed back into maintenance of what they own and reinvestment and they simply have less to play with for these purposes.

Economic inequality, mass job insecurity and unemployment are fairly powerful indictments of the capitalist system but they are not our only arguments against it. The working class faces hosts of other problems, all caused by

its unquestioning acceptance of capitalism. War arises from the rivalry for markets, raw materials, trade routes and strategic positions between the capitalist class of different countries. Wars are declared by governments, democratically elected or otherwise, in the interest of their national capitalist class and are fought by workers who unthinkingly suffer pain and death on a vast scale for "gains" which always prove illusory. That other scourge, racism, is a consequence of workers' insecure, precarious existence under capitalism. The housing problem does not stem from the fact that there are insufficient houses or not enough bricks to build them but from the fact that people who need houses have not got the money to buy them. Under capitalism the equation is not demand = need, but demand = need + ready cash. The list of working-class problems is endless and all of them, when examined closely, can be seen to be bound up with the workings of a system that produces not to satisfy human needs but to make profits.

The alternative to all this we call socialism. And by socialism we do not mean the way of administering *capitalism* practised by the Labour Party and its equivalents in other countries, nor do we mean the brutal *state capitalist* dictatorships that exist in countries like Russia, China and Cuba, that like to call themselves socialist. We mean one thing and only one thing: a world society in which all production will take place exclusively to satisfy human needs. This may at first sight seem a far-fetched proposition, but when one considers that, with modern technology, the world's resources are sufficient to assure a comfortable life for the whole of humanity, it is no more than a logical conclusion of seeing things as they are.

You may well ask how we are going to bring all this about. But the answer is that we are not. It can only be brought about when members of that vast majority of the population in the economically advanced countries of the world, the working class, decide they want to bring it about and then take conscious political action to do so. And by "conscious political action" we mean going to the ballot box and voting for candidates with a revolutionary mandate to dissolve capitalism and establish socialism. This democratically established society will itself be fully democratic and in it the means of life will be produced in abundance and used freely by everyone.

In the meantime we in the Socialist Party of Great Britain will continue to do everything in our power to persuade the world's working class that their interest is not served, and can never be served by support for a system that treats them as inferior, dispensable beings and puts a permanent barrier between themselves and the fruits of their labour.

HKM

POLITICAL NOTES

End of the Shah

In the welter of words about the passing of this remarkably successful capitalist monster, there was a passing reference to the first time he lost his throne in the early fifties. That time it was not the Ayatollah but a nationalist called Mossadegh who had the audacity not only to kick him off the Peacock Throne but to nationalise the British oil giant which practically owned the country.

The idea of nationalisation was of course too much for the British government, who were so angry that they wanted to resort to their old friend the gunboat. They had to be restrained from this notion by those pacifists in the Truman government of the USA (remember him? Hiroshima? Korea?). In due course the two governments managed to "destabilise" Mossadegh (the dirty tricks department of the CIA knew more modern tricks than gunboats), the "robbery" of nationalisation was put right and the Shah restored to await the Ayatollah (and Death the Great Leveller—it seems he hasn't taken his billions with him).

But the real point lies here. Who were the Blimps who wanted to send in the gunboat and who clearly hated the idea of nationalisation? Churchill? Eden? Well no—actually it was Attlee, the leader of the Labour government of 1945-51. And who were his supporters in Parliament in those days? Why the same apostles of nationalisation that we know and hate today—Wilson, Foot, Callaghan, Mikardo, Allaun—and the young Wedgben himself.

Russian workers

The *Guardian*, like the high-class reformist rag that it is, employs some of the finest leftist creeps in Fleet Street. Among them is a chap called Jonathan Steele who is now their chief foreign scribbler. Up to about ten years ago, he was their main Eastern European reporter and had been licking the boots of the so-called communist governments with great enjoyment.

Suddenly, for no reason that he could think of, this bewildered lefty found himself kicked out of a communist congress in Hungary. He never knew why and was clearly shocked that years of faithful creeping should be rewarded in this way. However, he managed to get over it and became the USA expert of the paper for the next decade. Whether he found it better or worse he never told us. No doubt he was hard put to find much difference.



However, he is now back in Moscow and clearly determined to lick even harder so that he will never be kicked out again. On July 29 he had a large spread in the *Guardian* with a picture of that great democratic newspaper called *Pravda*. And under the picture was the caption: "In a one-party state, readers' letters are the best guide to public opinion". Now isn't that delightful? The very fact of a one-party state means that the ruling class allows no opponents to open their mouths. Imagine the shock to the Soviet system if one day there appeared just one letter in *Pravda* saying: "As a member of the public, I wish to voice some public opinion. I think that free trade unions and political parties should be legalised at once. Oh yes, and that Brezhnev and the rest of the gang should be sent to enjoy the delights of the Gulag Archipelago".

A likely story, fit only for creeps like Steele—who, incidentally, has provided us with this gem: that most of the letter-writers are pensioners because they have most time. "Next in order are workers, clerks, farm workers and technicians." Now the very existence of a working class is proof positive of the existence not of socialism, but capitalism. It now seems that in Russia, they have got a socialism that not only has a working class but apparently any number of working classes. Steele omits to tell us whether there are many letters in *Pravda* from readers who are not members of any working class at all. For example, Communist Party bosses.

Labour hypocrisy

Can anyone fail to be sickened by the antics of the pseudo-socialist parties? When in opposition, they denounce the governments of their countries on account of the social evils all around and when they obtain power they continue with the mixture as before—the same capitalism with the same evils. Well, the British pseudos are now bidding for an all-time record in lies and humbug.

Barely a year ago they were the governing body, gallantly presiding over rising unemployment and cuts in education and the social services. There were cuts too in the living standards of the workers they tried to browbeat in the "winter of discontent" (which they have already erased from their memo-

ories) with rises of 5 per cent in the face of inflation of more than twice that amount. And now we read headlines like: "Varley attacks 'wicked' Tories over dole queues" (*Guardian* July 16). How can this unctuous humbug possibly call the Tories wicked for helplessly watching unemployment grow when he knows full well that his lot were exactly the same.

That question started out as rhetorical but it might as well get the obvious answer—that all these villainous politicians can do all these things simply because the working class allow themselves to be fooled by plausible rogues. Another specimen, the man who calls himself Tony Benn (this makes him a liar even before he says anything) complains that the media is (sic) 100 per cent anti-socialist... attacking the Young Socialists (he means young Trotskyists) and all those who stand for full employment, disarmament and peace".

This same Wedgwood, like Varley and the rest of them, was a leading member of the last Labour government which "stood" for unemployment, armaments and wars and all the other evils of capitalism. How could those young "socialists" sit there at their meetings (*Guardian* July 28) and allow this conman to get away with it?

Recently Michael Foot, who was mouthing the same cant (in the same high-pitched screech) as long ago as most people can remember, said that an anti-unemployment demonstration in South Wales was the greatest he had seen. How conveniently he forgets a similar protest at a steel works in his own constituency in Ebbw Vale, when he was minister in a government about to close the place down. The outrage among the workers was so great that they refused to let him speak and there was a serious danger of violence.

Not that we condone such tactics; we look forward to the day when workers will allow these leaders to speak—and then tell them they have had enough of capitalism, and its leftwing and rightwing stooges and are going to achieve a socialist world with their own intellects and their own efforts.

A Labour councillor is quoted (*Guardian* July 15) as saying that workers "live in poor houses and in a poor environment. That was bearable while they had work" (he didn't say why). "Now that a lot of them have lost their jobs they are starting to ask questions—the process that creates wealth has spurned them and cast them aside". Well spoken Labour councillor! (Even though this same thing has been going on for a couple of hundred years.) But what questions are they asking? Here's a suggestion: Who in hell needs Labour councillors? When did Labour politicians make a scrap of difference to those on the scrap heap?

LE WIEDBERG

Running Commentary



Take cover

Hiroshima and Nagasaki disappeared into the atomic dust just over thirty five years ago so it is clearly time for the government to give some serious thought to protecting the population in the event of a nuclear attack.

One way of doing this would be to build enough shelters for everyone to be able to take cover but that would cost between £60 and £80 billion. While a government will readily spend that sort of money on weapons they are not likely to be so free when it comes to protection from the weapons' effects. Rich people, of course, can always afford to build their own shelters; the rest of us must do the best we can with the blanket of official propaganda and advice, which is about all the government are prepared to offer.

The essence of this advice will be to keep faith; the government's airy assumption is that about 15 million people will be left in Britain after the attack (although most of them will be a bit deaf and probably bronzed, as if they had just come back from a holiday near a tropical jet airport) and that will be enough to eventually rebuild towns, roads, factories and so on and in general get the machinery of capitalist exploitation going again.

To ensure this, the government's plans give priority to their survival. There will then be money available for the construction of adequate shelters for our rulers, be there ever so little left for them to rule over. Rather lower—in fact at the bottom—of their priorities comes the safety and welfare of the working class. Perhaps there is an unconscious, ironical justice in this; after all, the working class don't have to keep capitalism in existence, don't have to make its weapons, fight its wars...

For the workers, anti-nuclear defence measures have a special meaning. We shall be encouraged to keep our heads wrapped in a jacket or some other substantial garment and to whitewash our windows which, writes Home Secretary Whitelaw, "...can provide very effective protection against fire resulting from the heat-flash from nuclear explosions."

This rather unnerving optimism was echoed, in a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* (23/6/80) from a Dr. Kitty Little of Oxford, on whose operating table we must all fervently hope never to find ourselves. Dr. Little offers us the assurance that "The only serious long-term hazard... are the stress disease symptoms caused by apprehension and fear." Her advice is to keep "an open tank of water" on the window sill to stop the heat flash igniting inflammable material.

So when the Bomb comes there will be rather a lot for us to cram into the four minutes. Whitewash the windows, set out tanks of water, select a durable jacket from the wardrobe, prop the table against the wall, with a sandbag or two to secure its base. Anyone who feels any fear or apprehension coming on may take solace from the thought that, beyond their flimsy defences, their ruling class are keeping the flag of privilege flying—as usual giving themselves the best possible chance in life.

Take it out

There are factories in Japan where the workers are able to give vent to their suppressed anger in a place called the Rumpus Room, where they are able to pummel effigies of the managers. But even this clever idea is not enough to divert all frustrations; in the Tokyo tube and suburban commuter trains, female travellers are becoming increasingly angry at the male hands which too often explore their bodies in the rush hour crush.

At peak travelling times, when the workers are hurrying to their places of exploitation, part of the degradation process is the cramming of three times as many people into those trains as they are designed to carry in comfort. There are, in fact, workers whose job it is to pack in the bodies as skilfully—which means as tightly and as profitably—as possible until, in the words of one railway security guard, "...you can't lift your hand to scratch your nose."

These journeys are not enlightened by the added insults of the posters which are aimed at encouraging even more discipline from the sardine-like travellers. Don't leave anything behind you; don't sit with your legs wide apart; don't wear clothes like a peacock's plumage; don't let your head flop onto your neighbour's shoulder. All these undisciplined travel habits take up too much room—and more room means more workers packed into the sweating crush.

After a journey like that (the average commuting time in Tokyo is two hours twenty minutes) and a day on the production line or in the office, the Rumpus Rooms must have plenty of customers. And beating a lifeless doll must be a lot cheaper than building more comfortable railways.

Japanese workers are often cited as examples of industrial discipline, people whose hard and uncomplaining work reaps rich rewards for their master class. Whatever the truth of this, it is clear that they rank pretty high among the world working class for the intensity of their exploitation—and for the

contempt in which they are held by their capitalist employers.

Little wonder that they experience such tensions. But there is a more useful way of taking out their frustrations, than in any Rumpus Room or in annoying their fellow workers.

Take off

Two episodes in the life of Steve Skingle of Plaistow — skinhead, unemployed, Tube traveller extraordinary.

On Easter Monday Steve, like any self-respecting London skinhead, was in Southend getting a bit of aggro. He was arrested and bailed to appear in court at a later date.

Before he went back to court, Steve was involved in the Tube crash at Holborn and, apparently unlike any self-respecting skinhead, helped to rescue the train driver. This made some lovely headlines for the copy-starved hacks in Fleet Street and eventually so impressed the Southend magistrates that they put Steve on probation.

"You could," commented the chairman of the Bench, "be a useful member of society. It is just a matter of bringing it out."

"Lovely," gasped Steve when he was asked what he thought of his sentence, then went back to Plaistow to work at this being a useful member of society.

He got a job as a labourer on a building site. "I'm enjoying it," he beamed. His father (who is out of work) weighed in with the hope that Steve would soon give up being a skinhead and obligingly defined what a useful member of society should be about: "...I hope that now he has started to find himself he'll get himself new clothes, a bird and a car."

Being a useful member of society means one thing to people who draw the dole in Plaistow and another to people who draw their dividends in Belgrave. Pompous magistrates judge people like Steve Skingle by their degree of conformity; is he "well dressed", in a steady job, looking forward to a lifetime of marriage and mortgage? Is he a toe-the-line wage worker, giving his all in the process of his own exploitation? Is he normal—by which they mean, does he conform?

How long will the working class assent to their inferior social position? How long will they direct their frustrations in the wrong direction? Steve's shaven head was, he hoped, a badge of his rebellion, a mindless reaction against something he does not understand but which he does not like. Perhaps, after all the publicity, he will be relieved that he can drop the pose and fall in with the docile role his conditioning demands of him.

This may satisfy insecure parents or pontificating magistrates—both symbols of capitalist authority—but it has little more to offer than a seaside punch-up.

IVAN

Economics of unemployment

With the experience of two centuries of capitalism to go on, it might be expected that by now everything about the causes of unemployment and its fluctuations would be known. In fact, most economists and politicians are as confused about it as were their predecessors. They go on propounding old discredited theories, or the new absurdities that have emerged in the last half century. The TUC and the various wings of the Labour Party are as much in the dark as are the Tories. In defiance of the evidence, they all have a childlike faith that there must exist somewhere a magic formula that would enable them to run capitalism without unemployment—if only they and their computers could find it.

Although Karl Marx was derided for saying that capitalism inevitably goes through successive phases of expansion, boom, crisis and depression, it has continued to follow that course. Marx's view has been challenged from two directions. In each longish period of low unemployment (as in the years 1895-1900, and again after World War II), it was claimed that the way to permanent boom had been discovered. In each long period of heavy unemployment (as in the very long depression in the last quarter of the 19th century, and again between the wars) it was expected that capitalism would never expand again and that depression had become permanent. This theory is being revived again now.

Past experience in Britain gives no support to the idea that unemployment consistently tends to become heavier. Unemployment now (August 1980) is 1,897,000, or 7.8 per cent. As a percentage it was often higher than this in the 19th century, and for the whole of the years between the wars it averaged 12 per cent. At its peak in 1932 it was 22 per cent, which would mean over 5

million unemployed at the present time.

Nor, of course, does experience support the belief of the Labour and Tory governments from 1945 to 1970 that they could "manage" affairs in such a way as to keep unemployment down to about 2 per cent. That long period of low unemployment was partly due to replacement of war damage, and partly to the fact that it took years of reconstruction in Germany and Japan before their modernised and highly competitive industries came back into the world market to the detriment of British capitalism.

The Tories have now reverted to an earlier myth which held that if capitalism is left to its own devices without government intervention it will create full employment. Their argument is that if inflation is stopped and if the government spends less and therefore reduces taxation, employers will retain more of their profits and will invest that extra money to provide more jobs. ("If the government cuts expenditure by £4,000 million a year, unemployment will fall," *Sir Keith Joseph*). This argument is easily answered. There was no inflation from 1820 to 1913, and government expenditure (measured against total national income) was less than a quarter of what it is now: but it did not prevent continuous unemployment or the Great Depression. The argument overlooks that employers are not in the business of creating jobs but of making profits. "Companies invest when they think they can make a profit" (*Financial Times* 21 March 1978). When they see no prospect of making a profit, they do not invest.

While Sir Keith Joseph says that the way to reduce unemployment is to reduce government expenditure, the TUC and Labour Party say that the way to reduce unemployment is to increase government expenditure. A pamphlet

published by the trade union NALGO claims that if government expenditure is increased by £7,000 million a year, unemployment will fall by 600,000. And Labour MP Michael Meacher says that each additional £1,000 million a year spent by the government creates an additional 235,000 new jobs (*Sunday Times* 20 July 1980).

What actually happens in practice? The Labour Government did increase government expenditure, from £20,000 million in 1973 to £44,000 million in 1977. But unemployment went up from 629,000 to 1,600,000. Both the Tory and Labour governments overlook that if a government collects more taxes and spends more, or collects less taxes and spends less, these are mere transfer operations; the combined buying power of the government and the rest of the population altogether is not altered.

But, say the advocates of increased government expenditure, it also leads to an expansion of production generally, and thus increases the total number of jobs. Again the facts say otherwise. When the 1974 Labour government vastly increased government expenditure, the Index of Production did not show a rise but a fall. In 1976 it was nine per cent below 1973, and in 1977 it was still below the 1973 level.

Post-war governments, Tory as well as Labour, operated on the principle adopted in 1944 by the Labour Party Conference "If bad trade and general unemployment threaten... we should give people more money, not less to spend." The only way in which a government can "give everybody more money" to spend is by printing more notes, each of which buys less and less. While Denis Healey was Chancellor of the Exchequer, his government printed and spent an additional £4,500 million; to which the Thatcher government has added another £1,200 million. This has had no effect on unemployment. Its only achievement is to put up prices. Sir Keith Joseph recently resurrected another old but plausible fallacy: "Just as you can price yourself out of a job, so you can price yourself into one, by taking lower wages." There might be some employers who would take on more workers if wages were reduced from, say £100 a week to £80, to employ ten workers at £80 instead of eight workers at £100, but as a remedy for unemployment it is a non-starter. The ten workers would produce more than the eight workers, so their employer would have to sell more. If he succeeded in capturing a larger share of the market, it would be at the expense of rival employers, who would employ fewer workers in consequence.

Today's dole queue



Sir Keith's non-solution for unemployment prompted an opposite solution from the unions. A union official put it like this: "Workers are unemployed because wages are too low to buy all the factories produce. If wages were raised, workers would buy more and more workers would be employed".

This too is a plausible argument. If wages went up more than prices, workers could buy more. But, as profits would be correspondingly reduced, the profit-receivers would have to spend or invest less than before. As profit margins would be reduced, it would also discourage investment. In the period 1973 to 1977 wages did rise more than prices but, as already mentioned, unemployment more than doubled.

Marx met and dealt with a similar argument. It was put to him that if wages were raised it would enable workers to buy more and would prevent a crisis occurring. Marx pointed out in reply that "crises are precisely always preceded by a period in which wages rise generally and the working class actually gets a larger share of the annual product intended for consumption". Far from preventing a crisis this phase of higher real wages is always "harbinger

of a coming crisis" (*Capital* Vol. II, Kerr edition, page 476).

Marx dealt with unemployment from two aspects. First, there is the displacement of labour by machinery. This increases unemployment, but if the investment of capital grows fast enough (as it does when sales and profits are rising) it "absorbs not only the men thrown out of work but also fresh contingents" (*Capital*, Vol. I, Kerr edition, p.496). So in that phase total unemployment falls.

But in the competitive struggle which gives markets to the cheaper producer, each capitalist is trying to accumulate capital and expand his scale of operations, not just to meet a known

demand, but as an end in itself. Inevitably "overproduction" develops in some big markets, as for example motor cars, shipbuilding and steel in 1974, and a crisis occurs. Sales in those markets decline, investment ceases to be profitable, production is cut and workers are stood off. The declining industries and falling wage totals drag down other industries and there is depression, with unemployment at peak levels. This continues until such time as conditions develop which make investment profitable again.

This is the course capitalism follows, paying no heed whatever to ministerial vapourings about full employment, whether Tory or Labour.

H.

Unemployed relief queue, New York 1932



SOCIALIST STANDARD 50 years ago

LABOUR GOVERNMENT TELLS THE UNEMPLOYED TO EMIGRATE

We recall how the Labour Party cried to high heaven when the Tories and Liberals told the unemployed to get out of the country and look for work elsewhere. Mr. Tom Shaw, at present Minister for War, was suitably ironical eighteen months ago concerning the "ecstasies" of the Imperialists "about the development of distant parts of the Earth". The last Conservative Government set up a transfer board to move unemployed miners to imaginary areas where jobs were vacant. How the Labour Party scoffed at the idea of solving unemployment by moving the unemployed from one depressed area to another. But now the Labour Government, according to the *Daily Herald* of 12th August, is considering a big Empire settlement plan by which the unemployed will be employed on development schemes in the Dominions. So Mr. Lansbury and the Labour Government have nothing else to offer to the unemployed than to ship them off to the Dominions, in spite of the fact that the Canadian Government and the Australian Labour Government are faced with alarming and continuous unemployment of their own and firmly declare their determination not to receive Great Britain's surplus workers.

(From an editorial "Labour Government's Solution - Unemployed to Emigrate", in the *Socialist Standard*, September 1930.)

2 million out of work

"The Government accept as one of their primary aims and responsibilities, the maintenance of a high and stable level of employment after the War". This statement formed part of a White Paper issued in 1944 by the then coalition government comprised of the Tory and Labour Parties and an odd Liberal. Many workers thought the ultimate in working class existence had arrived—a job for life. Some stupid Labour MP's thought a high level of employment meant jobs for all, but they were quickly disillusioned. What has gone wrong? On both counts—'high' and 'stable'—all governments, particularly over the past decade, have missed their aim.

Unemployment, a social scourge of the twenties and thirties, is again front page news. Politicians vie with each other in putting a mathematical equation to words. In 1975, when unemployment reached 1½ million under a

Labour government, Michael Foot, then Minister of Employment, said this figure was 'intolerable'. In May of this year, 1,659,000 unemployed was 'distressing' to Mrs. Thatcher, 'terrifying' to Eric Varley; and when the July count rose to nearly 1,900,000 this, said the Shadow Cabinet, was 'appalling'. All these crocodile tears do nothing to solve the problems and indeed encourage an air of cynicism about politics.

It seems likely that the 2 million mark will be reached by the time this article is published. The official figures are only for those who have registered at the Labour Exchange, (or, to give it some class, the Job Centres) and the real number is undoubtedly higher. Ron Brown, Labour MP for Leith, in a recent letter to the *Guardian*, when the official figure was just over 1½ millions, said... "the true figures would be near-

er two million if unregistered women were included".

The current recession has almost tumbled into a slump. One region after another feels the lash of redundancies and short time working. Newspapers give an almost daily tally of the lost jobs, many from firms that are household names and the 'pride' of British industry. Guest Keen and Nettlefold; Courtaulds; British Steel; Ford Motors... The reasons given for the downturn in the workforce are standard—a fall in demand for their products. This is a common feature of capitalism, in which demand has nothing to do with people's needs; it is a market reflection of a system based on the profit motive.

Suddenly it seems that all politicians and the media are concerned with young people. It is not the same for those workers around 60 who are getting towards the end of their useful productive life. The teenagers who cannot find a job are a serious matter. Supposing these young people, on the dole for months on end, developed a disinterest in, or even an antipathy towards, wage slavery. Wouldn't it bode ill for this system? The writer, leaving school at 15 in the middle of the thirties, was the successful applicant out of 82 others for the plum job of office boy in a respectable firm of Estate Agents; salary (not a wage in an office) was fifteen old shillings a week. Forty five years on, history repeats itself as 500 young people apply for a shop assistant's job in Sheffield at £32 per week. A director of the firm stated... "We were stunned when we saw the queue. They were standing five abreast... we managed to interview about 80 and had to send the rest home. Some of the youngsters who turned up were highly qualified... but we were more concerned with dress sense and personality". In Smethwick, West

Midlands, 167 applied for a vacancy as Junior Office Receptionist at £24.50 for a 48 hour week.

The July figures included 108,000 young people leaving school and entering the labour market. This high figure will be repeated until 1982 when the result of the baby boom of the early 1960s runs down. (We are just waiting for the politician who claims that part of the reason for high unemployment is the irresponsible sexual habits of the working class.) A large proportion of the young people can take heart in the government promise that if by Easter 1981 they are still on the dole, they will be guaranteed a place in the Youth Opportunity Programme and taught an alternative trade. Whatever they are taught at the centres is no guarantee of a job. With flames of ambition quickly dampened, young people are finding out early in life how capitalism can discard them.

Promises to deal with unemployment have always been a vote catcher to the major parties. Labour (who "care" for people) like to be known as the Party/government who are concerned that the workers follow their traditional role of wage slaves. Tories are pictured as the hard-faced crowd who by forcing workers on the dole will be able to run the system more effectively for the benefit of the rich. Both the self bestowed accolade and the accusation are untrue.

In 1976 the Labour Government set themselves a 3 year target; to reduce unemployment to 700,000 by 1979. The April 1979 figure was 1,340,595, nearly double their target. How's that for a party who claimed they could plan capitalism and deal with its ups and downs. High though the April figure was, it showed a drop of 60,000 on the previous month and this decrease was hailed by Mr Callaghan as... "a product of the economic and industrial strategy" which Labour had been following. If we grant him this concession, can we also assume that the figure 1,340,595 was also due to Labour strategy. Oh no. This high figure, according to Callaghan, was the result of "fundamental structural problems" in the world economy. He has probably never come closer to a more accurate assessment of the situation. But now he is in opposition, he blames the Tories for the high figures. Let us, and him, not forget that under the Labour Government in 1977 unemployment was over 1,600,000.

Capitalism is going through one of its periodical crises and the Tories claim that they have not increased unemployment deliberately. Their major concern is to reduce inflation to single figures and if this means unemployment has got to rise, then so be it. Callaghan held an identical view... "But as long as we are trying to squeeze inflation out of the economy, this unemployment is unfortunately one of the consequences that we must face". (House of Commons, 25/1/77). But does one necessarily give rise to the other? Between the end of

1920 and the middle of 1933, prices fell by over 50 per cent, yet this same period saw record levels of unemployment. Inflation and unemployment are not hand maidens. The former is a deliberate act by government, the latter a logical sequence of the capitalist system.

A more detailed analysis of the causes of unemployment appears in another article in this issue. Many solutions are put forward. Perhaps the most novel so far emanates from the three former Labour Cabinet Ministers Williams, Rodgers and Owen. "Such a national industry training scheme would ease unemployment. So would longer holidays". The last one takes our fancy, although no mention is made of extra holiday money.

"Heavy unemployment is not a British phenomenon. It is a global epidemic" said the *Daily Express* on 28 July 1980. There is a global answer, not only to this problem, but to the other social evils that prevent us from realising our full potential.

CEM

Party News

Propaganda tour

A week or so before thousands of workers decided to spend some of their holiday on a trip to London to witness the extravagant 80th birthday celebrations of an aristocratic parasite, four members of the Socialist Party of Great Britain harmonised their holiday with a propaganda tour around the country. While some went to worship a hand-waving grandmother of no noted talent, we were campaigning for the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced, to put the means of life into the hands of the whole community by democratic action.

From London we drove to Bolton. Through South Yorkshire, noticing the number of 'Factories for Sale', the insanity of a society which periodically slumps into depression was graphically apparent. Workers thrown onto the slag heap of the unemployed, people hungry and shivering while factories and raw materials are guarded from use because the owners of these means of life would not stand to make a profit at such a time. In Bolton we were encouraged by the branch's programme of weekly propaganda meetings on assorted topics and their methodical and energetic canvassing campaign. A public meeting on "The Class Struggle" was held that evening in the York Hotel.

The following morning we travelled from Bolton across England to Seaham for a debate with the Liberals, organised by the North-East branch. Recently, letters from members of the SPGB have appeared in virtually every edition of the *Sunderland Echo* and have stirred up a lively correspondence and interest

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The Mound, Edinburgh

in socialism. The debate was on the motion "Reform or Revolution?" Andrew Ellis, a prospective parliamentary candidate for the Liberal Party and their speaker at the debate, put the case for the piecemeal patching up of capitalism. The case for revolution was then put to the large audience with vigour and wit. Zestful contributions from the floor followed, including one from the chairman of the local Conservative Association which challenged the Socialist Party to debate at a later date.

We left Seaham the next morning in time to arrive in Scotland for the regular Saturday afternoon outdoor socialist meetings organised by the Glasgow branch in Exchange Square. A boisterous assembly was addressed by three speakers in all, and the meeting, not being brought to an end when one democrat from the audience tried to heave the speaker off the platform, continued until early evening. Edinburgh branch run regular outdoor meetings at their "Speaker's Corner", the Mound, and it was to there that we travelled the next day. With a short break for supper the meeting ran on from 3.00pm to 10.00pm and was addressed by six speakers—and this just within earshot of the hapless caterwaulings of the local Salvation Army, still singing to the skies for a solution to capitalism's chaos.

Leaving Scotland and journeying southwards our next stop was for a two-and-a-half hour outdoor meeting at St Peter's Square, Manchester, which began at lunchtime. Comrades from Bolton and Manchester have used this speaking station before and it is now likely that it will soon be a regular socialist meeting site. That evening we had a good attendance at an indoor meeting at the Wheatsheaf public house, addressed by a party speaker on the title "Thatcher and Murray: Partners in Capitalism".

From Manchester we went to Stoke for a debate with the Communist Party where a note informed us that, although the CP speaker had agreed in writing to debate, his branch had advised him to withdraw on account of the wording of the motion, which had already been changed once to suit them. The Communist Party is renowned neither for its principled consistency (it urged the working class to vote for the Tories when Stalin had concluded a pact with Churchill after 1943), nor its willing-

ness to openly debate its political position against the SPGB. The socialist speaker, however, provided the audience with a comprehensive criticism of the Left and an explanation of socialist principles.

An outdoor afternoon meeting which we held in the Market Square, Derby—our next stop—was temporarily halted by some hooligans who, having jettisoned the speaker from the platform, justified the action with an earthy praise for the Tory Party. A meeting was held that evening in the Garrick Hotel on the question "Is A Third World War Inevitable?" where, after the speaker's address, a contentious argument with a local Labour councillor—a CND member who learnt nothing from the movements 60's failure—dominated the discussion. The following morning the speaker was interviewed live by Radio Derby on the subject of War. The fluent and provocative statements made by the party speaker prompted Radio Derby to agree to hold a phone-in programme the next time a public meeting is organised by the SPGB in Derby.

From Derby we made our way home-wards, stopping off for a final outdoor meeting at the Martyr's Memorial, Oxford. A sizeable crowd gradually congregated on this sunny afternoon and a local comrade agreed that future meetings on this site would be useful. Our 1,400 mile tour ended that evening.

GARY JAY

Activity in France

Socialists in France, aided by comrades from Britain, have been carrying out organised socialist propaganda in France since the beginning of this year. *Socialisme Mondial*, the French-language journal of the Socialist Party of Canada, is now on sale in a number of Paris bookshops as well as in Marseilles, Nancy, Metz, Rheims and Aix-en-Provence. So far three public meetings have been held, the first in Rheims in March, the other two in Paris; one a debate on Mayday with Charles Lorient of the Mouvement Français pour l'Abondance par le Socialisme Distributif, the other a straightforward presentation of our case by comrade H. Moss in July. The two Paris meetings were very successful both in terms of outsiders

present and of literature sold. It is planned to hold regular meetings in Paris from September onwards. The French comrades have also brought out as a pamphlet a translation of four of Engels' 1881 articles from the *Labour Standard* on trade unions and the wages system.

The Queen Mother

The following resolution was unanimously carried at the Islington branch of the Socialist Party of Great Britain at its meeting on 4 August, 1980. A copy has been sent for publication in the *Islington Gazette*. We are sure that many *Socialist Standard* readers will agree with its content:

Islington branch of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, on this eightieth birthday of Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, hereby resolves to express its hostility to the existence of the monarchy and the parasitic class it represents. In an age when one third of the world's population suffers from malnutrition, when millions throughout the world face the indignity of the dole queue, when 53,000 families in Britain alone are homeless, when health facilities are cut back while money is spent on nuclear warheads, for the workers of this country to be ecstatic that an aristocrat has survived to be eighty is distasteful in the extreme. The concern of our party remains with the wealth producers of the world, including those who face old age in poverty and with the threat of hypothermia. Let Kings and Queens be left to the history books; let working people create a better society for ourselves.

CORRECTION

Unfortunately two errors appeared in the July *Socialist Standard*. The German neo-Nazi party (p. 135) is called the National Party of Germany (NDP) not "the New Democratic Party". Roy Jenkins (p. 140) is the President of the European Commission, not of the European Parliament.

In the March issue of the *Socialist Standard*, in the article "From barter to inflation", the word *convertible* on the first line of p. 53 should have read *inconvertible*. In the item Marx and the Monetarists ("Running Commentary") in the May issue, there is a passage which should have read "where the currency was gold (and/or a convertible paper currency...".

We make these corrections, if belatedly, because the economic laws governing the circulation of *convertible* (into a fixed amount of gold) and *inconvertible* (as exists today) paper currencies are quite different.

Editorial Committee

MEETINGS AND NOTICES

BIRMINGHAM

Saturday 13 September 7.00

WHO ARE THE REAL SCROUNGERS?

Dr. Johnson House
Bull Street

GLASGOW

Sunday 14 September 7.30

**UNEMPLOYMENT:
WHAT CAN BE DONE?**

McLellan Galleries
Sauchiehall Street

HARROW

Wednesday 10 September 7.30

**THE MIDDLE CLASS:
SHAME-FACED WAGE SLAVES**

The Victoria Hall
Sheepcote Road

READING

Wednesday 24 September 7.30

WHAT CAUSES INFLATION?

Friends Meeting House
Church Street
(Off London Street)

WALSALL

Friday 12 September 7.30

**WHY SOCIALISTS REJECT
NATIONALISATION**
Caldmore County Primary School
Carless Street

LONDON

HARINGEY

Wednesday 10 September 8.15

A NEW WORLD SOCIETY

Speaker: J. Radley
Children's Room
Muswell Hill Library
Queen's Avenue, N10

ISLINGTON

Friday 10 October 7.30

REBELS WITHOUT A CAUSE

Speaker: S. Coleman
Caxton House
129 St. John's Way, N19

LEWISHAM

Thursday 11 September 8.15

CAPITALISM AND WAR

Speaker: C. Skelton
Room 2, Davenport House
Davenport Road, SE6

Saturday 11 October 8.15

SOCIALISM AND TRADE UNIONS

Speaker: E. Hardy
(venue as above)

S.W. LONDON

Monday 8 September 8.00

THE EVOLUTION OF MANKIND

Speaker: H. Walters
52 Clapham High Street, SW4

MIDLANDS MEETINGS

WALSALL

Friday 12 September 7.30

WHY SOCIALISTS REJECT NATIONALISATION

Caldmore County Primary School, Carless Street

BIRMINGHAM

Saturday 13 September 11.00-4.00

The Bull Ring and Chamberlain Square

Saturday 13 September 7.00

WHO ARE THE REAL SCROUNGERS?

Dr. Johnson House, Bull Street

Assistance needed to sell literature and distribute handbills. Members and sympathisers wanting, or who can offer, accommodation over the weekend should contact the Birmingham Branch secretary (021-748 5805) or R. Cox in Haslemere (see Directory).

OUTDOOR MEETINGS

BIRMINGHAM

Saturday 13 September 11.00-4.00

The Bull Ring and
Chamberlain Square

LONDON

HYDE PARK

Every Sunday 10.00-7.00

Monday 10 November,

Small Conway Hall,
Red Lion Square, London.

THE BOMB AND THE DOLE

QUEUE - ABOLISH THE CAUSE.

Speakers: S. Coleman, D. Donnelly
and E. Hardy.

If you can distribute handbills for
the meeting during October please
contact the Propaganda Committee
at Head Office.

EDUCATION CLASS

ANTHROPOLOGY

AND SOCIALISM

The Origins of Society

Speaker: B. McNeeney

Saturday 27 September 3.00

52 Clapham High Street, SW4

ADVANCE NOTICE ISLINGTON BRANCH PUBLIC MEETING

Friday 10 October 7.30

REBELS WITHOUT A CAUSE

Speaker: S. Coleman

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Discussion Groups

BRISTOL. 2nd Thursday in month, 7.00. The Waggon and Horses, Stapleton Rd, Bristol. Corres: J. Flowers, 101 Chesterfield Rd, St. Andrews, Bristol BS6 5DS.

CARDIFF. A. McNeeney, 51 Pen-y-lan Road, Roath, Cardiff. Tel. (0222) 390048.

MANCHESTER. Thursdays 8.30. The Crown Hotel, 321 Deansgate.

NOTTINGHAM. 3rd Monday in month, 7.30. 33, Church Drive, Carrington, Nottingham. Corres: F. V. Cash, 62 William Street, Derby DE1 3LZ.

NORTHAMPTON. K. Taylor, 52 Avon Drive, Kings Heath. Tel. (0604-) 582130.

READING. E. Tasker, 42 Redhatch Drive, Earley, Reading RG6 2QR.

STOKE-ON-TRENT. 1st Thurs in month 8.30. The Coachmakers Arms, Lichfield Street, Hanley. Corres. W. Mountford 28 Lewis St. Stoke.

DIRECTORY

Branches

BIRMINGHAM. 2nd and 4th Thursdays in month, 7.30. Dr. Johnson House, Bull Street. Corres. W. Mack, 36 Alderpsits Road, Shard End, Birmingham B34 7RR. Tel. (021-) 748 5805.

BOLTON. Tuesdays 8.30. The Founders Arms, St. Georges Street. Corres. Stephen Finch, 3 Hinkler Avenue, Great Lever, Bolton. Tel. (0204-) 651892.

CAMDEN (BLOOMSBURY). 1st and 3rd Thursdays in month, 6.00 to 8.00. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Corres. Conway Hall.

EDINBURGH. 2nd and 4th Thursdays in month, 8.00. Trades Council Halls, 14 Picardy Place. Corres. Anne Dalgleish, 5 Queensway, Pennicuik, Midlothian EH26 0HE. Tel. (71-) 72261.

GLASGOW. Mondays 8.00. Woodside Halls, Clarendon St. Corres. R. Donnelly, 15 Napier's Street.

GUILDFORD. 2nd and 4th Friday 7.00. Friends Meeting House, North Street. Corres. T. Bullen, 17 Bellfields Road, Guildford GU1 1QG. Tel. (0483) 34958.

HARINGEY. Thursdays 8.00. West Green library, Vincent Road, Tottenham, London N15 (few minutes from Turnpike Lane tube). Corres. 17 Dorset Rd, N22.

ISLINGTON. Mondays 8.00. Latin American Bookshop, 29 Islington Park Street (off Upper Street), N1. Corres. Chris Dufton, 19 Brambledown, 77 Crouch Hill, N4.

LEWISHAM. 2nd and 4th Thursdays in month, 8.15. Room 2, Davenport House, Davenport Road, London SE6. Corres. Davenport House.

MIDHERTS. 2nd Wednesday in month. For details of venue contact P. Mattingly, 27 Woodstock Road, Broxbourne, Herts. Tel. 6164872.

NORTH EAST. 1st and 3rd Wednesdays 8.00. Room L30 Edinburgh Building, Sunderland Polytechnic College, Chester Road, Sunderland. Corres. V. Maratty, 184 The Avenue, Deneside, Seaham.

NORTH WEST LONDON. 2nd and 4th Thursdays in month, 8.00. Abbey Community Centre, Belsize Road, NW6 (corner of Abbey Road, next to Lillie Langtry pub). Corres. C. May, 1 Hanover Road, NW10. Tel. 459 3437.

PADDINGTON. Thursdays 8.30. The Swan, 17 Needham Road W11 (off Westbourne Grove). Corres. SPGB, 76 Ladbroke Grove, W11.

REDBRIDGE. 1st and 3rd Thursdays in month, 8.00. Abbey Hall, 87 Axe Street, Barking (rear of Town Hall). Corres. D. Deutz, 4 St. Mary's Ave, London E11.

SOUTHEND. 1st and 3rd Tuesdays in month, 8.00. 19 Kingswood Chase, Leigh-on-Sea. Corres. A. Partner, 28 Hambro Hill, Rayleigh, Essex. Rayleigh (0268) 774974.

SOUTH WEST LONDON. Mondays (except Bank holidays) 8.30. Head Office, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4. Corres. 52 Clapham High Street, SW4.

SWANSEA. 2nd Monday in month, 7.30. Central Library, Alexandra Road, Swansea. Corres. H. K. Moss, 4 Aylesbury Road, Brynmill, Swansea SA2 0BS. Tel. (0792-) 464872.

WEST LONDON. Fridays 8.00. The Old Chiswick Town Hall, Turnham Green (corner of Sutton Court Rd.). Corres. E. Haynes, 127 Kingston Rd, Teddington, Middlesex.

WEST YORKSHIRE. 3rd Monday in month, 7.30. Ring o' Bells pub, 18 Bolton Rd, Bradford 1. Corres. 20 Brandfort St. Bradford BD7 2ES. Tel. (0274) 75136.

For Information

BATH. B. McNeeney, 7 Garden Flat, Rivers Street. Tel. (0225) 331989.

BRISTOL. J. Flowers, 101 Chesterfield Road, St. Andrews, Bristol BS6 5DS.

DERBY. Frank V. Cash, 62 William Street, Derby DE1 3LZ.

DONCASTER. R. W. Edwards, 9 Mathersey Close, Doncaster DN4 7PZ. Tel. 0302 57996.

DUNDEE. J. Finnie, 28 Hill Street.

EAST GRINSTEAD. A. Atkinson, 24 Estcoots Drive, East Grinstead, W. Sussex. Tel. (0342-) 311874.

EAST KILBRIDE. J. Thompson, 2 Balfour Terrace, Murray, East Kilbride. Tel. (32) 23083.

EDGWARE. A. Waite, 61 Fairfield Crescent. Tel. (01) 952 3556.

ESSEX/SUFFOLK. Mackenzie Dodds, Fern Cottage, Fern Hill, Glensford, Suffolk.

HARROW. Ian Stuart, 39 Eastcote Road, Pinner. Tel. 866 0216.

HARWICH. C. Bennett, 48 Ashley Road, Dovercourt, Harwich, Essex.

HULL. Peter Pink, 9 Beech Grove, Beverly Road.

MID LANCs. Brian Livesey, 149 Belfield Road, Accrington, Lancs.

HASLEMERE. R. Cox, 86 Lion Lane. Tel. (0428) 2885.

MEDWAY (Kent). L. Cox, 110 Bell's Lane, Hoo, Rochester, Kent. Tel. 0634 250513.

MILTON KEYNES. C. Kincaid, 14 Weavers Hill, Milton Keynes, MK11 2BD.

NEWPORT. Miles Webb, 5 Sedgemoor Court, Allt-y-ryn, Newport, Gwent.

NORWICH. Colin Green, 3 Bell Meadow, Higham. Tel. 985 468.

NOTTINGHAM. 3rd Thursday in month, 7.30. 33 Church Drive, Carrington. Corres. F. V. Cash, 62 William Street, Derby DE1 3LZ.

OXFORD. J. Robertson, 80 Iffley Turn, Oxford. 0865 770834.

SKIPTON. R. Cooper, 1 Caxton Garth, Threshfield, Skipton BD23 5EZ. Grassington (0756-) 752621.

SUNDERLAND. J. Toomey, 9 Gillingham Road, Grindon. 078 324 2039.

WOKING. C. Skelton, 1 Adelaide Villas, Copse Road, St. Johns. Woking 66119.

WELWYN GARDEN CITY. C. Cox, 118 Oakdale, Welwyn Gdn City. Tel. 27591.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

OBJECT

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds:

- 1] That Society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
- 2] That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
- 3] That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
- 4] That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
- 5] That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
- 6] That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
- 7] That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
- 8] The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action, determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Anyone agreeing with the above principles and wishing to join should apply to nearest branch or Head Office.

Socialist Party of Great Britain
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN.
Tel. (01-) 622 3811

The Executive Committee meets 7.30 every Tuesday at 52 Clapham High Street, SW4. Correspondence for the Executive Committee should be sent to the General Secretary at the above address. Letters containing postal orders, cheques to be crossed, made payable to SPGB and sent to A. Waite at the above address. Orders for literature should be sent to the Literature Dept. at the above address. Articles, correspondence and notices for the *Socialist Standard* to be sent to SSPC, 76 Ladbroke Grove, London W11.

Plain Words

The National Consumer Group recently brought out a pamphlet, *Gobbledygook*, which is an attack on the almost unintelligible jargon used in official documents. Now socialists are also interested in eradicating gobbledygook, and here are some examples:

The National Interest

This should be interpreted as The Capitalist Interest, since the interest of capitalist and worker must always be opposed. The capitalist must always try to keep the cost of production (which includes wages) as low as possible, while the worker must strive to protect his wages and working conditions. The phrase is often used by politicians as a last resort when they can't think of a logical argument to use (which is very often the case)—"Of course the government is not opposed to strikes in principle, but *this* strike is against the national interest..."

We Will Have To Pull Our Belts In

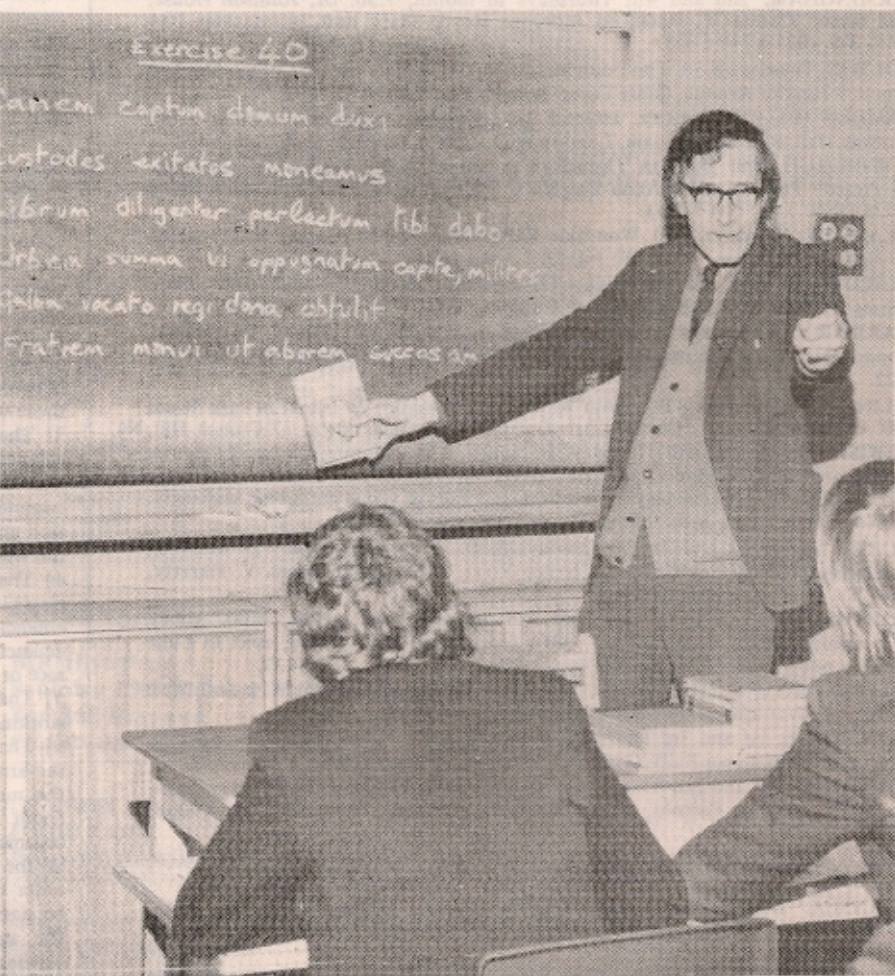
Old chestnut usually employed when one government has just been elected in place of another. Generally along the lines that since the last bunch have made such a hash of things, the new bunch will have to apply some firm but unpopular measures to sort out the mess, which usually means another assault on the living-standards of the working-class. If this phrase had been copyrighted it would have accrued a fortune for whoever penned it since it has been used by practically every politician. Often used in conjunction with "The National Interest".

We Are Paying Ourselves Too Much

Delicate play on words here. It really means: We are paying you too much (you being the working class). Especially directed at those workers who have the audacity to ask for more wages as a buffer against rising prices. Does not include royal families, company directors, members of the Stock Exchange and so on, who are grossly underpaid.

Marxist Guerrilla

Much beloved by the media this one. If any serious attempt at accuracy was made then the phrase should read "Leninist Guerrilla". The people in question tend to be minority groups seeking political ends by violent means, a tactic advocated by Lenin and not by Marx. The media, deliberately or through political ignorance, apply the term to any political group who carry out a *coup d'état* (usually described as a "Marxist Revolution").



You've Never Had It So Good

Historical curio quoted by Harold MacMillan at a time when workers drank five star brandy and smoked Corrona-Corronas, ran expensive cars and holidayed in the Bahamas. Not used nowadays since even gullible workers find it hard to swallow.

Viability

Trendy new word used by smart-alec politicoes. Although having different literal meaning has tended to become synonymous with "profitability", for example: "Unfortunately, viability has not been achieved by this plant therefore we have no alternative..."

British Disease

No, not a dose of the clap. Not even the common cold. In fact this has nothing to do with disease at all. Refers to a popular prejudice that British workers are lazy and like nothing better than shirking work, and drinking tea all day. Personified in obnoxious and unfunny cartoon strips, also provides much material for would-be comedians who make a living feeding the prejudices of their audiences with stories about workers on strike. Strangely, the

working class still manage to churn out enough surplus value to ensure that members of the capitalist class can scratch up the ready for jamborees like Ascot, Henley and Cowes. After the exhausting business of guzzling the Dom Perignon, and splashing hundreds of pounds on the horses of their choice, they can if they wish, sleep for as long as they like without fear of public condemnation.

Finally, we include one phrase which the politicians and the media do not use but which, although not gobbledygook, does warrant a mention because of its profound implications:

Abolish The Wages System

Penned by Karl Marx, this phrase neatly sums up Marx's concept of Scientific Socialism—a world-wide society without buying, selling or exchange in any form, where all wealth would be produced and democratically controlled by and in the interests of society as a whole. Nowadays this phrase is used exclusively by the SPGB and its companion parties abroad in an effort to combat the gobbledygook of the mass media and pseudo socialists.

TONE